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Find five innocent in IRA gun smuggle

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Amid whoops and cheers from supporters, five admitted Irish Republican Army gun runners were found innocent yesterday in Brooklyn Federal Court of conspiring to smuggle an arsenal of heavy weapons to Northern Ireland.

Members of the four-woman, eight-man jury said they reached their verdict because the government had failed to prove that the defendants had not been induced into the gunrunning by agents of the CIA.

The defendants—who included Michael Flannery, the 80-year-old founder of the Irish Northern Aid Committee—were charged with conspiring to ship a 20-mm. cannon, a flame-thrower, 47 machine guns, 11 M-16 rifles and thousands of rounds of ammunition to the IRA in Northern Ireland between December 1980 and June 1981.

Defense attorneys in the seven-week trial charged that the five had been led to believe that the weapons supplier they dealt with, Yonkers gun dealer George DeMeo, 48, was a CIA operative.

ALTHOUGH THE prosecution produced CIA witnesses to deny any agency connection with DeMeo, defense attorneys showed jurors a document signed by then-FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover saying that DeMeo was being investigated for his suspected role in a CIA plot to overthrow Cuban leader Fidel Castro.

The jury, which included two persons of Irish descent, reached its verdict after three days of deliberations.

When the verdict was announced, Flannery, who had remained stone-

faced throughout the trial, leaped to his feet and waved his fists in the air.

More than 100 spectators who had packed the sixth-floor courtroom erupted in applause and began waving American flags, shouting: "Up the IRA!"

The other defendants acquitted in the case were: Thomas Falvey, 54, of 187th Place, Hollis, Queens; Patrick Mullen, 45, of Ridgewood Ave., Cypress Hills, Brooklyn; Daniel Gormley, 33, of Yonkers, and George Harrison, 67, of E. 9th St., Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. All are admitted gun runners for the IRA.